regent and incarnation" of the spirits. Sacrifices were made at the royal shrine or *kakoloto* ("at the skulls"), where the skulls of past chiefs were kept, in order to:-

(i) control the elements i.e. to ensure a sufficient supply of rain and avoid the dangers caused by storms; also to control fire by providing a new fire ceremonially kindled[1] from which everyone took his fire.

(ii) to ensure fertility, towards which the royal marriage had great influence. The queen's special province was agriculture and her kitchen was sanctified by human sacrifice to guarantee the national food supply. Ceremonially treated seed was distributed to be mixed with the seed of each granary.

(b) *To represent the country in its external relations*, principally to make trade agreements with other chiefs, or to make war on other peoples in order to get tribute and plunder. The war leader *(Kesongo)* has his own residence entirely separate from that of the king, whom he must not meet face to face except on certain ceremonial occasions.[2] Each king must inaugurate his reign with a war, during which or after which he must ceremonially "eat the old one" *(oku lia ekongo)* - who was usually a specially fattened slave cooked with the flesh of the principal animals commonly eaten.[3]

(c) *To dispense justice.* The chief's court or *olusenje* was the supreme court of the chiefdom. The chief had the final word in any case, but most chiefs acted according to custom.

(d) *To protect himself and the chiefdom*, the chief could use "magic" (?) which might have been accounted witchcraft or murder if practised without authority: e.g. the ritual murder of a pregnant woman, or of the children whose lives were required for building and furnishing the queen's kitchen.

(e) The chief made much use of divination in order to carry out his office. For this purpose he had his own diviner *(citue cosoma)*, who was of the blood royal; but he also consulted diviners of other regions and types.

Succession to chiefship is in the male line,[4] from father to son, elder brother to younger brother or brother's son, or sometimes to one more distantly related. The election is made by the councillors whose duty it is (?), ordinarily before the old chief's death is announced. These same councillors may depose an unpopular chief, and there have been many such deposition. This "democratic" tendency of the Ovimbundu has been noted by most writers. Childs points out that it is attested by the fact that a chief (formerly as well as today) works in his own fields, and by folk-tales which give incidental and intimate pictures of petty details in the lives of the chiefs†

(1) See above, p.26.
(2) Is Bailundu he, with certain other officials, was of the stock of slaves of the state *(ovindili viosoma)*.
(3) Childs, p.21. Many early writers refer to the cannibalism of the "Jagas" or "Imbangalas" who are thought to have been the Ovimbundu chiefs. (See above, p.8, and also Lacerda and Ravenstein, quoted by Childs, pp.17ff.)
(4) But *inheritance* is said to follow a different line among chiefs from among commoners; possibly inheritance is also in the paternal line. See Childs p.18.

† See footnote 1, p. 31

for murder as two oxen and two slaves; for adultery, two oxen, a pig, and a slave.) Today a man who has committed adultery sometimes takes the woman and all children under three years of age, but this is for the husband to decide. An adulterer with one of the chief's wives was castrated but not killed, and the castration might be compounded for a high fine, while he, his sisters, and the sons of his sisters would become slaves of the chief.(1) Hambly states finally that "Criminal law did not distinguish between responsibility for intentional and unintentional offences."(2)

There is no information regarding the kinds of cases tried or the punishments given in the courts of village headmen or sub-chiefs today.

INHERITANCE

It has been noted above that moveable property is inherited in the maternal line, land in the paternal line.(3) The eldest brother of the deceased's mother has the first claim and is responsible for settling disputes. He may distribute the property to the mother of the deceased, the maternal grandfather, or to a brother of the deceased, but is not compelled to do this. Women never inherit cattle or land, although the sisters of a deceased woman usually receive most of her household utensils (the rest belong to her husband). A widow goes to the house of (? marries) the eldest brother of the deceased or her own maternal uncle, or she may return to her father's village. Apparently her children accompany her, although one would expect them to go to her brother.(4)

DIVORCE

Divorce appears to be infrequent; grounds for divorce are many, but difficulties are often overcome by a compromise between the two kin groups concerned. Causes for dissatisfaction on the part of a husband include his wife's incompetence, dishonesty, physical weakness, or infidelity (in the last case today a fine from the adulterer is usually accepted and the marriage continues). Barrenness is not a ground for divorce; usually the husband takes a second wife, but the first maintains her position as head wife. Sterility in the male is sometimes suspected, in which case the husband may try another girl, with his wife's consent, or the woman another man. A woman may divorce a man if he is impotent (not sterile), or if he ill-treats her, but not because he is unfaithful. If for any of these reasons the woman returns to her family, the latter are expected to return the marriage payment, although they may wait until another suitor appears who will pay the deserted husband. Whether the initiative in divorce is taken by the woman or the man, the marriage is not annulled until a renunciatory ceremony has been carried out by the husband, the wife, and the wife's father, in the presence of the village headman. The husband receives from his wife's father a roll of tobacco and a pig, and then places leaves(5) and palm oil on his wife's back; he then slaps his wife's back saying "It is finished".

(1) Hambly, op.cit., p.203. (2) Loc.cit.
(3) See above, p.18, and Childs, 1949, p.44.
(4) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.199.
(5) The leaf used is of the *apu* tree; the same leaf is tied to the pole of the *etambo* of a new village, as a sign of divorce from the old site. (Childs, 1949, p.38; this is the only context in which Childs mentions divorce.)

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

straight lines. The legs show the usual flexion of the knees and a shortening which is out of proportion to the body length. The lower limbs of most Angolan figures have these characteristics. The body of this figure is hollow and the head detachable. The incised headdress is imitative of the coiffure of Vachokue women. 532

Cangamba, a village in eastern Angola, is a confluence of tribal elements, namely, Vambuella, Luchazi, Babunda, and Vachokue, whose physical appearance, hairdressing, tooth mutilation, and tribal marks differ considerably. The man who sold the figurine brought it furtively. He was an Ocimbundu, but the work is of Chokue origin. The figure, I am informed, was filled with medicine, then placed near a patient who was undergoing curative treatment. 171 [755]

The figurine (*ngeve*) of a woman having a number of dark feathers attached to her back has only one use. A caravan setting out for a long journey is accompanied by a medicine-man whose outfit includes such a figurine. Should the caravan leader be in doubt when choosing between two paths, the medicine-man sets up the image at the parting of the ways. He kneels before it and asks questions, then plugs his nostrils in order to make replies in a falsetto voice supposed to come from the figurine. Thus advised respecting the route to follow, the caravan continues its journey (Plate XXI, Fig. 5; p. 156). 484 778 787

The wooden figure (Plate XXI, Fig. 3) is of exceptional interest because of its connection with the blacksmith's craft, which is associated with introductory rites for apprentices. In former days a newly initiated blacksmith was expected to disappear for a period during which he killed a man. On returning to the work of his forge the blacksmith made a wooden figure of which this example, one of five obtained, is typical. The spirit of the murdered man took up its abode in the effigy and in this way helped with the work. The figure, which is of the usual dimensions, namely, 36 cm high, has the greater part of its surface covered with reddened earth (pp. 159–160). 326 775

Two figurines (Plate XXI, Figs. 1, 6) were obtained from women of the Vachokue tribe in the village of Ngongo, Ngalangi. Here the Vachokue and the Ovimbundu mingle to such an extent that customs are no doubt transferred from one culture to the other. These wooden images are used by childless women, or by women whose infants have died. The woman who sold these figures pressed them to her breasts to show the manner of use. People standing around smiled and nodded their approval. A wooden figure of this kind is substituted for a dead twin. 171 842 [845]

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

of the girl by her husband, and if she were not a virgin he took a hot stick from the fire and burned a hole through her loin cloth. "The girl began to cry, but she had to take the burned cloth to her mother." In such an instance there does not seem to be an idea of guilt. The husband had accepted something that was damaged, and the payment of a pig by the girl's parents reunited the two young people. In former days, also at present, there are boy and girl companions who sleep together, supposedly without having sexual connections, although they may be seventeen years of age. The girl calls the boy *ombaisi*, and he calls her by the same name. The Ovimbundu understand something of the physiology of conception; the woman is, however, regarded as only a receiving vessel. "The man puts something into her which grows."

Husband and wife do not sleep in the same bed during the wife's menstrual period; the wife sleeps on a mat at the side of her husband's bed. A woman who is menstruating never cooks food, but women give mutual aid in this matter. A man with more than one wife sleeps either four nights or seven nights with each; the four-night cycle is more usual than the seven-night cycle among the Ovimbundu. Each wife has a separate hut and kitchen. There is no wife lending, but a visitor may be provided with a widow or even with an unmarried girl. Then the man would have to pay the woman.

Ngonga was able to give information with regard to homosexuality. "There are men who want men, and women who want women." Ngonga says he has heard people talk about it, and "they think this very bad." A woman has been known to make an artificial penis for use with another woman. The medicine-man will sometimes dress as a woman. Ngonga, who has seen a man dress as a woman, stated that the man arranged his cloth like that of a woman, put palm oil on his hair, and joined the women to pound corn on the rocks. "The other people laughed and spoke bad words to him. His brother, father, and uncle beat him," but without producing reformation.

DIVORCE

There are many grounds on which a man may secure a divorce, but it does not follow that divorce is frequent. On the contrary the evidence indicates that the majority of difficulties are overcome by a compromise between the relations of the husband and those of the wife. The main causes of dissatisfaction with a wife are want of ability in cultivating her garden, physical weakness, a habit of thieving from the gardens of other women, incompetence in cooking,

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

586 bad temper, too much talking, some physical defect arising from childbirth, and infidelity. But the husband usually accepts payment from the adulterer, and in that event divorce is not sought.

595 586 If a mother has no milk, there is a likelihood that her children will die in infancy; this is a cause for divorce. Barrenness gives great dissatisfaction, but is not necessarily a cause for divorce. Usually the husband marries another girl, while the first wife retains her position as head-wife. With regard to frigidity my informant said [933] that sometimes "a married woman does not want her husband to do those things which husbands like to do, or she may want him very seldom." The husband is so angry that he may go away hunting for a long time. The husband may tell some old people, who talk to the girl. If his wife is a good cook, the husband may keep her and secure another girl as a second wife. Sometimes the husband ties the hands of the girl if she resists him. If a wife is returned to her parents on the grounds of her frigidity her husband does not receive compensatory payment, but he hopes that another man will take the girl and pay him for her.

• 842 Sterility of the male is sometimes suspected, in which case the husband tries another girl, possibly with his wife's consent. The wife may be allowed to have relations with another man in the hope of producing children. The evidence shows that there is definite experiment to test barrenness of the woman and sterility of the male.

In case of impotence (not sterility of the male sperm) the wife leaves her husband. In event of barrenness the woman visits a medicine-man, who gives her a charm consisting of two cowrie shells on a strip of leather which she wears round her neck; a potion also will be given her. If the barren condition is due to malevolence of spirits, the face of the woman is painted with streaks of red and white. Such a woman is said to gain *ocitumba*. *Tumba* means "a swell," "a rise."

586 [937] A woman may divorce her husband if he does not treat her well. If he beats her or refuses to give her cloth and palm oil, she will leave him; but she will not leave him if he is merely unfaithful. If a woman is unhappy with her husband, she will tell her people about the trouble. Her father and mother may say, "Go and try again."

After a year the woman may still be unhappy, in which case she goes to her parents. The husband visits his wife's parents to ask why she has left him. The parents give reasons and offer to return the token he presented for the girl. The return of the husband's tokens is usually long delayed because the parents of the girl are

843 supposed to have intercourse with his wife during her pregnancy, but this custom of continence is declining.

A pregnant woman in particular must not steal. If she does so, her child will refuse to be born until some one present at the confinement goes out and steals something.

Eating the flesh of a hare during pregnancy will give the baby a split lip. If the flesh of the owl is eaten, the baby will have large round eyes.

The expectant mother must not sit on a mortar, a pestle, or a piece of rock; if she does so, labor will be prolonged.

[261] A pregnant woman takes earth from just outside her door. She drinks this in water so that the placenta will be delivered whole.

A pregnant woman is not supposed to carry anything in her cloth. If she does so, the child will have a long head.

A pregnant woman is a potential corpse. A man ought not to quarrel with his pregnant wife and if she says angry things to him he should not reply. He would not speak to a corpse in anger; on the contrary, he would respect a corpse; he must, therefore, respect a pregnant woman. It is a bad omen to see a pregnant woman up in a tree. A man who sees such a woman is expected to shoot her.

[543] If a pregnant woman has scolded her husband and is sorry, she goes out to the fields. There she gets her cloth covered with burrs then returns home. If her husband begins to pick off the burrs there is reconciliation.

842 There are several arrangements whereby a woman who has borne only girls may secure male births, provided she can find a woman who has borne only boys and is anxious to have a girl. The simplest way of reversing the births is for the women to exchange belts. The belt is a string, or possibly a plaited fiber girdle an inch in width which is worn next to the body. From this string depends the woman's lower garment. A second way of reversing the births is for the women to make an exchange of food through a hole in the wall of a hut. The food is handed in on a basket tray. The woman inside the hut receives the food while standing with her back to the hole; she then places the food under the bed. The tray is handed back through the hole by the recipient who still keeps her back to the aperture. There is a third method whereby a woman who has borne boys may be made to bear girls, and *vice versa*. The woman who has borne only boys gives to the woman who has borne only girls, an arrow, a knife, a bow, and an ax. The articles given in return are a pounding stick, a broom, a tray and a basket. The value

3: Hambly E-3 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

of this symbolism relating to occupations of males and females 842
respectively, is obvious.

Many women bear children when they are away in the fields, but 844
help at home is often given. The mothers of the wife and of the husband may not be present at the confinement. No childless woman may be near during the confinement or convalescence. The father may not be present or "the child would be ashamed to be born." Before and during her pregnancy a woman feeds her husband with [784]
a prickly plant which is mixed in his food; this makes him faithful to her.

The abdomen is bound after delivery in order to keep the uterus in position. There is a very small amount of bleeding after childbirth; in fact the flow of blood is quite finished in two or three days. The nearer the diet comes to that of the white man the greater the bleeding at delivery. A pregnant woman may not beat a drum, or she will bear a drum. A woman who sees the blood from circumcision of a male will not have any children.

When a female child is born, the umbilical cord is cut with a hoe to ensure that the female will be a good worker in the field. The cord of a male is cut with an arrow to insure good hunting. A newly born child receives a drink of beer, and a cord is tied round its waist. This is not for support; it is the string from which, much later, the lower garment hangs. Girls do not menstruate until they are fifteen 841
or even seventeen years of age. During the months after first menstruation a girl advances rapidly from childhood to womanhood.

The medicines that women take to secure abortions are bitter. 847
A woman will refuse quinine because she thinks it will cause abortion. It is certain that twins are welcome among the Ovimbundu, but there 845
are special observances connected with their birth and death. A twin birth is not thought to imply dual fatherhood. Twins are called Njamba ("elephant") and Hosi ("lion"). Although twins are of opposite sexes each receives one of the two names. Njamba is the first born, and Hosi is the second to be delivered. The medicine-man holds a ceremony to cure the mother of twins. The afterbirth of twins is placed in two gourds and carried outside the village for burial by two midwives. The mother of twins must wear round her neck the horn of an antelope given by the medicine-man. She has to blow this when crossing a river, meeting a crowd of people, or seeing a hawk overhead. People laugh at her and in fun say that she is a pig or a bitch. "The woman says the same kind of words to them." Children may be adopted, but they never really 597

3. Hambly E-S (1929-1930) 1934 FF13 Mbundu FF13

drunk. The concoction is described in Umbundu as *ikemba sioku fuadiaspo eso* ("medicine to take away belly"). 847

When the monthly period begins too early in life, the medicine-man recommends that the young girl should wear the cowrie necklace worn by her mother's mother. 841

A deformed child is destroyed, but not if it has been allowed to survive the first day. 847

If male triplets are born, two stay permanently with the mother. At the age of five years one child goes to the king, whose child he becomes. 851

When a woman has had relationships with more than one man, she will die in childbirth unless the medicine-man is called to cure her. 837

In a Vachokue village of eastern Angola I bought a female wooden figure. It was explained that this would be nursed by a woman, one of whose twins was dead, in order to induce another conception. Moreover, the nursing of the figure prevents the death of the second twin. The Ovimbundu also use these wooden figurines for replacing dead twins (p. 163). 532 845 842

Children are suckled for a long time; even those of three years and older come to the breast. There are instances in which milk is present but lacking the nutritive qualities; then the baby is likely to die. The matter is simpler when a mother gives no milk at all because the baby is given to another woman, but not necessarily to a woman who is suckling a child. A baby whose mother has no milk may be given to a woman who has not borne a child for many years, and the sucking of the child quickly induces a milk supply. This is agreed upon by informants at Ngalangi and Elende who have seen a child nursed by a woman with withered breasts. Protection is given to the fontanelle by covering it with a vegetable gum which hardens. 853

Near the chief village of the Vangangella at Ngalangi there is a mound decorated with feathers and painted wooden posts (Plate XCII, Fig. 1). Childless women are placed on the mound which is near a river. They are covered with mud, after which the medicine-man sings songs and administers potions. The women go home and are made to sit on mounds in their kitchens. These mounds, which are made in rows, like earth heaped up after hoeing a trench, may be a symbol of successful agriculture and human fertility. 842 789

On looking into the subject of blood brotherhood I found that an exchange of blood between two males who swore mutual fidelity was at one time common. At the present day an exchange of blood is 608

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

787 The handle of a hoe is the symbol of cultivation. The appearance of the miniature handle at the top of the basket implies that the spirit of a woman who was rich in corn is troubling the community.

Two united, human figures of wood indicate that a twin will die. The Ovimbundu welcome twins; when one is dead the mother has a wooden figure (Plate XXI, Fig. 1) made to take its place; this is nursed to induce another conception and to comfort the remaining child.

The little gourd means that a deceased person was secretly poisoned in revenge because of his thefts from a field.

The seed of the oil palm means that a large gourd of palm oil has been stolen.

The description of funeral rites gave an account of the questioning of the spirit of the deceased. If no answer is given, divination is made to learn the cause of death.

There is no divination by examination of entrails. Bones are thrown in playing a game, but this is not connected with divination.

EQUIPMENT AND MISCELLANEOUS DUTIES

755 [894] The basket of an Ocimbundu medicine-man at Caconda contained, in addition to the human bone, pounder, and hoe blades already mentioned, two carved wooden female figures whose specific use is unknown. It is known, however, that such figures may be nursed and held to the breast of a woman who wishes to conceive. There was a cowrie shell on a cord which forms a charm to be worn round the neck of a woman who desires children. A small tin box containing a coin and some stones was used for shaking. The kind of sound produced, also any arrested movement of the objects in the box, are indications of the guilt of a person whose name was mentioned just as the objects ceased to move.

A large antelope horn, filled with a mixture of goat's fat and charcoal from the bones of a goat, was intended for use in curing the sick. The contents of the horn become liquid when heated; then they can be dropped on the heads of the people who come for treatment. It was explained that a number of sick people sat around the medicine-man who walked to each person and poured out a small quantity of medicine on the patient's head.

[534] The only musical instruments used by a medicine-man are a small friction drum and a rattle. At Ngalangi I saw a medicine-man give a dance during which he slashed about him with a small ax, which was evidently a ceremonial object, since the construction

W. Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

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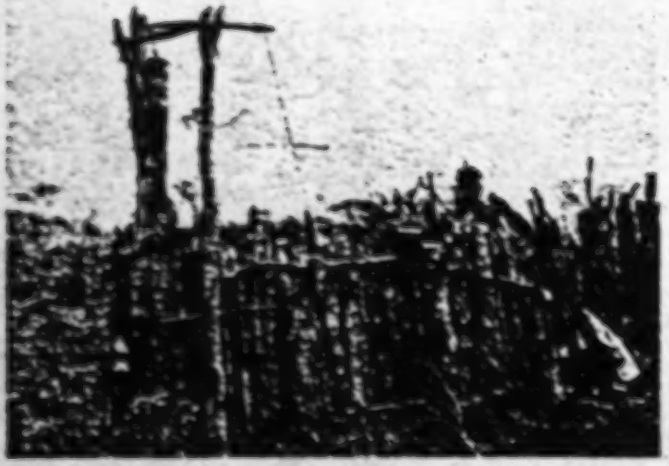

2

MAGIC AND HUNTING, CENTRAL ANGOLA

Fig. 1. Mound where children women are covered with mud to give fertility, Vanguangulo, Nyakusi

Fig. 2. Trap for leopards, Ganguelas

[p.446]

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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Marriages may also be ended by the wife leaving her husband. This may be the consequence of quarrels; however at times a woman may just run off without any apparent reason. Her husband may go to her kin and bring her back or may just get married again—such an episode may occur after many years of a marriage which has previously appeared happy. People who have been married previously can be married again according to the pattern described previously. Middle-aged and elderly people would leave out the festivities and would just have the meal together, or simply count themselves as married by the payment of the bridewealth.

There does exist a formal ceremony of divorce in which maize flour is smeared on the upper part of the face by the husband, and this will take place in the presence of representatives of the wife's kin. A man will do this when his wife has shown herself disrespectful to him or has quarrelled with his kin or her co-wife. As the Ovimbundu regard marriage as being for the procreation of children, a barren wife should be, they say, sent away but often in practice this is not done, if the wife is otherwise satisfactory.

Legally, the Portuguese administration recognizes both the customary marriage and the Catholic marriage ceremony. The Catholic missions report to the post people who, having been married in church, then make customary marriages, and these may be subjected to such sanctions as being sent to contract labour. The Protestant church marriages are not apparently legally recognized but they are subject to the authority of the Protestant church courts which grant divorces on certain grounds. The *chefe de posto* on his annual visit to take the check on the census may get angry with polygynists, but in fact no very effective administrative action exists with regard to indigenous marriage.

The motives given for polygynous marriage are the desire to have many children and (in the case of a chief) the need to have cooks to provide hospitality for guests. Large-scale polygyny is thought to be rather funny; I was told, as something amusing, that the former chief Mbati had 17 wives. Kafelo, the former chief of Gumba, had 6 wives, the highest number of continuing polygynous marriages I found. In Epalanga out of